

Individual and Family Fact Sheet – Transition Planning

October 2007

What Is Transition Planning?

A coordinated set of activities designed to assist the student to develop skills, strengths and preferences in the areas of:

- ❖ Employment /Vocational Skills
- ❖ Post Secondary Education
- ❖ Community participation
- ❖ Independent Living
- ❖ Advocacy and Self Determination

When Should Students Begin to Plan For What Happens After High School?

Students and their families should begin to explore options in high school, but no later than age 16.

Why Is It Important To Plan Early?

The reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA - 2004) requires that a student's Individual Education Program (IEP) must include information about **needed transition services beginning no later than the year in which the child turns 16 and updated annually** thereafter. The student's IEP must also include information about agencies that may be involved in helping him or her to move from school to post-school activities and those agencies' responsibilities to your child.

In order to ensure a smooth and successful transition, your family member's DDS case manager must have a clear understanding of the student's needs prior to graduation. You may also request the assistance of a transition coordinator to help plan the student's transition. Working closely with the case manager and transition coordinator will help to identify and link the student to any services and supports he or she will need upon graduation.

How Does DDS Assist Students and Families In Transition Planning?

All DDS regions have transition coordinators who may be able to provide assistance to your family and case manager as you navigate through the transition process. Transition coordinators may suggest you participate in a person-centered planning process, which is an opportunity for your son or daughter to express his or her dreams for the future. Some of these processes include MAPS, PATH, Essential Lifestyle Planning and Personal Futures Planning. You will also learn about the possibilities available through an approach known as self determination, which enables you to develop something uniquely suited to your family member's preferences and to hire your own staff. Transition coordinators can:

- ❖ Provide written information regarding transition planning as well DDS supports and services.
- ❖ Partner with families, students, school systems and adult service agencies to plan for and prepare the student to transition from school to adult life.
- ❖ Assist in the preparation for transition by identifying the student's projected level of support, as it relates to vocational/day needs.

When My Son or Daughter Leaves School, Can I Be Assured That Supports Will Be Available If Needed?

Unlike the school years that are mandated by law, services and supports available through DDS are not mandated. This means that these services are available if the resources have been allocated to DDS. Check with your case manager or transition coordinator for information about your specific situation.



What Is The Family's Responsibility To Be Considered For Vocational/Day Funding?

At age 18 an individual should apply to the Department of Social Services (DSS), for Medicaid/Title 19 and Social Security Entitlements. It is imperative that your son/daughter be eligible for Medicaid in order to receive DDS vocational or day program funding upon graduation.

What Is Medicaid?

Medicaid, or Title 19, is a state-federal partnership to provide health care services to disabled adults, the elderly and certain low income populations, primarily children. States and the federal government share the cost of the Medicaid program. DDS services are considered health care services for disabled children and adults, and through our Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waivers the Federal Government will share the cost of those services.

What Are The DDS HCBS Waivers ?

DDS has two HCBS Waivers. One is the Individual and Family Support waiver, to provide in-home, day, vocational, and family support services for people who live in their own or family home. The second is the Comprehensive Waiver for services delivered in licensed settings and vocational and in-home services for people who need a more intensive level of support to remain in their own or family home. Vocational and day supports for school graduates are funded through DDS's HCBS waivers. To be eligible for the HCBS Waivers an individual must qualify for Medicaid and must agree to maintain Medicaid eligibility.

What other information will be important regarding transition?

- Special Education Laws and Rights
- Transition team members
- Self-determination & individual supports
- Individual budgets for services
- Self advocacy groups and resources
- Various employment options
- Guardianship

What are the supports and services in my community?

The student/ transition team should consider various support options and visit as many qualified provider/ vendor programs in your local community as possible before making a decision. You may also want to explore hiring your own staff to provide individualized day service supports. Your case manager or transition coordinator can assist you with this process.

What if my son or daughter chooses supports after graduation that he or she doesn't like or that do not meet his or her needs?

The funds that DDS has set aside for your family member's day support are portable. This means that this money can be used to choose different supports if needed. There are certain steps to go through to make this happen and your case manager will help you.

What Other Agencies May Assist In The Transition Process?

Depending upon eligibility criteria, the following agencies may provide consultative services and/or funding.

- Department of Children and Families (DCF), www.ct.gov/DCF
- Bureau of Rehabilitative Services (BRS), www.brs.state.ct.us
- Board of Educational Services for the Blind (BESB), www.besb.state.ct.us
- Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), www.ct.gov/dmhas
- Department of Social services (DSS), www.ct.gov/dss
- Social Security Administration

Other Web resources of interest:

CT State Department of Education: www.state.ct.us/sde (Transition Manual, "Building a Bridge")

State Education Resource Center (SERC): www.ctserc.org

The ARC of Connecticut: www.arcct.com

The Special Education Advocate: www.wrightslaw.com

Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center: <http://cpacinc.org>

Probate Court/ guardianship: www.jud.state.ct.us/probate

